

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FREEDOM FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 497, the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act that would endanger health care workers, their families and their patients.

H.R. 497 would put more strain on our already fragile health care system by eliminating the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for health care providers.

As a Member of Congress, who represents a congressional district that has experienced the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I must oppose this bill.

The Biden administration plans to end the public health emergency in May, but we must remember that we are currently in a winter surge.

The current COVID positivity rate in Houston is 20 percent.

We are still in a pandemic, and we must do what we can to slow the spread so that less people are ending up in hospitals.

Before widespread availability and access to COVID vaccines, health care workers were 3 times more likely to get COVID than the rest of the public.

By keeping the vaccine mandates for health care workers, we can continue to slow the spread and keep health care workers and their families safe.

In a 2020 survey by MentalHealthAmerica, 76 percent of respondents were worried about bringing COVID home to their children, and half of respondents worried about bringing COVID home to their partners or an older family member.

In a survey of U.S. physicians, it was found that the portion of the day spent treating COVID-19 patients was associated with higher PTSD scores, depression and anxiety.

Additionally, many health care workers at the beginning of the pandemic saw coworkers get sick and die from COVID, and this contributed to their increased stress and anxiety.

According to the University of Chicago, it was found that an increase in staff vaccination rates resulted in fewer COVID-19 cases among the staff and the patients.

Additionally, the same study found that the more transmittable variants of COVID may require additional boosters for staff to help manage COVID-19 cases in nursing homes.

By taking away the vaccine mandate, we are making health care workers and their patients even more susceptible to the virus.

By taking away the vaccine mandate, we are neglecting vulnerable Americans who deserve their right to life and safety when getting health care.

It is important to remember, that vaccines are not new and that they are necessary to limiting viruses and keeping the country safe.

It is federal law that any health care settings that receive money for Medicare or Medicaid patients must ensure that their health care workers are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Even though the vaccine requirement caused many health care workers to leave, the health care work force is larger than it was prior to the pandemic.

As of December 2022, the health sector added 54,700 jobs over the previous month and the employment in healthcare was 1.2 percent higher than the peak in February 2020.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill to show our support for our health care workers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAIR COLA FOR SENIORS ACT OF 2023

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2023, which would require using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) when calculating cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for federal retirement programs. The proposed index would adjust the benefits programs such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, civil service retirement, military retirement, veterans' pensions and compensations, and other retirement programs.

Current law uses the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which measures costs solely of working individuals—unlike most Social Security beneficiaries. Using CPI-W does not adequately consider the rising expenditures of retirement, such as housing and healthcare costs. This inadequate accounting amounts to an effective decrease in benefits for those who rely on these federal programs. The proposed change will lead to increased COLAs, ensuring that seniors are able to keep up with the rising costs of their real-world expenses.

I thank Representatives JIMMY PANETTA (CA-19), STEVE COHEN (TN-09), LUCY MCBATH (GA-07), SETH MOULTON (MA-06), BETTY MCCOLLUM (MN-04), LOIS FRANKEL (FL-22), RAÚL GRIJALVA (AZ-03), BRENDAN BOYLE (PA-02), MARY GAY SCANLON (PA-05), DINA TITUS (NV-01), CHELLIE PINGREE (ME-01), DEBORAH ROSS (NC-02), ILHAN OMAR (MN-05), JASON CROW (CO-06), JOYCE BEATTY (OH-03), ANDY KIM (NJ-03), GWEN MOORE (WI-04), TED LIEU (CA-36), and JAMAAL BOWMAN (NY-16) for their support as original cosponsors. I look forward to working with the Chairpersons of the Ways and Means, Veterans' Affairs, Oversight and Reform, and Armed Services Committees to ensure this critical piece of legislation becomes law.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROMOTING ACCESS TO DIABETIC SHOES ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act.

With serious comorbidities and complications associated with it, diabetes has a significant impact on the health of our country. Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower extremity amputation in the United States. Research shows that approximately 50 percent of people with diabetes will develop at least some degree of peripheral neuropathy and that 25 percent can expect to develop a foot ulcer at some point. As many as 24 percent of people who develop a foot ulcer will go on to have an amputation.

The good news is that preventive measures such as therapeutic or diabetic shoes can help avert the progression of neuropathy and the need for amputation. However, current Medicare statute does not allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to fulfill certification requirements as a patient's primary care providers. This means that patients who typically see these providers need to be referred to a physician for certification and continue to see them afterwards. Not only does it increase costs, this policy interrupts patient care and delays access to time-sensitive services.

My legislation would allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to fulfill these documentation requirements, which is within their scope of practice. Enacting this legislation would streamline this administrative process and allow Medicare patients to get the care they need in a timely fashion.

I urge my colleagues support this bipartisan legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EMANCIPATION STATUE REMOVAL ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce the Emancipation Statue Removal Act, which would remove the Emancipation Statue from Lincoln Park, a federal park in the District of Columbia, and require the Secretary of the Interior to donate the statue to a museum or similar entity. This bill is part of a series of statue and memorial removal bills I am introducing during Black History Month.

The Emancipation Statue was dedicated on April 14, 1876, the 11th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Although formerly enslaved Americans paid for this statue, it was designed and sculpted without their input, and it shows. The paternalistic

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

statue depicting a Black man on his knees in front of President Lincoln fails to recognize African Americans' agency in pressing for their own emancipation.

Understandably, recently liberated African Americans during the Reconstruction era were grateful for any recognition of their freedom in a country where they still experienced virtually total exclusion from American life. However, even at the time of its unveiling, prominent Black Americans expressed their displeasure with the statue's design, including Frederick Douglass. During his keynote address at the statue's unveiling, Douglass pointedly did not praise the statue. Rather, in a letter to the editor of the National Republican a few days after the unveiling, Douglass expressed his dismay at the statue: "The negro here, though rising, is still on his knees and nude. What I want to see before I die is a monument representing the negro, not couchant on his knees like a four-footed animal, but erect on his feet like a man."

In 2020, Boston removed its replica of the statue and plans to place it in a publicly accessible location where it can be better contextualized. It is time for Congress to place the original statue in a museum, too.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded for Roll Call No. 95, Roll Call No. 96, Roll Call No. 97, Roll Call No. 98, Roll Call No. 99, and Roll Call No. 100 on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Since my first day in office, I have been squarely focused on what I was sent here to do: Represent Hoosiers of the 6th Congressional District of Indiana. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress and the State of Indiana have been laser focused on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the health of Hoosiers and all Americans. I am proud to have worked across the aisle to pass multiple bipartisan coronavirus relief bills that provided much needed assistance to Hoosiers and small businesses. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration has politicized the COVID-19 pandemic to implement their radical, leftist agenda through unilateral executive action.

I adamantly support H.R. 382, the Pandemic is over Act and H.R. 497, the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act. In September 2022, President Biden said the "pandemic is over," but subsequently decided to extend the Public Health Emergency (PHE) several more times. President Biden has abused the PHE to implement student loan cancellation absent congressional authority, keep students from school, and force vaccine and mask mandates. Regrettably, President Biden compounded workforce shortages by requiring vaccine mandates for federal health care workers, disproportionately hurting rural and underserved communities.

Had I been present I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 95 (the Previous Questions), Yea on Roll Call No. 96 (Adoption of H. Res. 75), Nay on Roll Call No. 97 (Motion to Re-

commit), Yea on Roll Call No. 98 (Final Passage of H.R. 497), Nay on Roll Call No. 99 (Motion to Recommit), and Yea on Roll Call No. 100 (Final Passage of H.R. 382).

REMEMBERING THE 1973 VASTER HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the 1973 Vaster High School Basketball Team. Vaster High School was in Moscow, Arkansas, in Jefferson County, and at the time, had a population of around 600 people. Although a small community and school, this team had tenacious grit in the State Overall Championship tournament.

Back in 1973, the State of Arkansas decided state champions through an overall state tournament instead of having a state champion by different classifications, as it does today. In a 3-day tournament, Class B Vaster beat Morrilton, a Class AA school on Thursday, then beat Conway, a Class AAA school on Friday, and on Saturday, Vaster faced the Class AAAA, defending state champion, Central High School from Little Rock. It was described as a David versus Goliath matchup going into the game, and everyone expected a blowout win for Central. In the end, Central won the game by only 1 point. Though a heartbreaking loss, Vaster had put itself on the map, had persevered, and exhibited pride in the school, the town, and in the Cinderella run with its first-year head coach and group of fantastic players.

There is an event today honoring the 50th Anniversary of Vasters runner-up bid, and while Vaster High School is no longer in existence, the memory of the School shall always be bright because of the 1973 team who fought Central High for the state title. I would like to finish with naming the members of the 1973 Vaster High School basketball team.

Herbert Pryor (Head Coach), Andrew Carr (Assistant Coach), Cleveland Allen, Erick Biley, Samuel Biley Jr., Reddic Barkins, Rodney Crawford, (Trainer), Jimmy Dade, Carl Evans, James Evans, Tommy Evans, Roy Franklin, Jimmy Gladney, Ronnie Grice (Manager), Homer Jackson, Melvin Jackson, Jacob Jones (Trainer), Charles Petty, Rodney Ryce, Thomas Tarty.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank those who have remembered and are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the 1973 Vaster High School Basketball Team. These young men will forever be remembered in the history of Arkansas sports.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT SILVA FOSTER UPON RECEIVING THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Master Sergeant Silva

Foster of the 349th Air Mobility Wing upon receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service, dedication, and sacrifice during Operation Allies Refuge. He exemplifies the best of America, and his tireless efforts guarantee the safety of all those who call America home.

Last year, the servicemembers of the 349th Air Mobility Wing met a challenge of colossal scale when they played a pivotal role in completing the drawdown of forces from Afghanistan. This command was critical in the largest noncombatant evacuation operation in known history, Operation Allies Refuge, ultimately saving over 124,000 lives. The 349th Air Mobility Wing directly supported the evacuation of nearly 13,000 Afghans while simultaneously managing the security and operations at Hamid Karzai International Airport. I have listened to countless stories from this group of brave men and women that exemplify the character, leadership, and bravery that is cultivated at Travis Air Force Base.

Service records only scratch the surface of the courageous actions performed by the 349th Air Mobility Wing. They put their hearts and lives on the line to save so many. These valiant servicemembers like Master Sergeant Silva Foster epitomize the values of courage and patriotism.

On behalf of a grateful country and all the constituents of California's Eighth Congressional District, I would like to congratulate Master Sergeant Silva Foster of the 349th Air Mobility Wing for receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross and extend my sincere gratitude for his sacrifice and contributions to the defense of this great country.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MRS. BONNIE BELL MCGOWAN

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mrs. Bonnie Bell McGowan. A beloved member of our community, Mrs. McGowan's life was marked by her love for golf and her unwavering commitment to helping others achieve success through the game.

Shortly before she was born, Mrs. McGowan's parents began managing and operating Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club. With their home situated on Pine Needles' 18th hole, Mrs. McGowan was heavily exposed to golf in her youth and quickly developed a love for the game. She went on to play at Pinecrest High School, Rollins College, and the University of North Carolina. While traveling with her husband, Pat McGowan, on the PGA tour, she became the president of the PGA Tour Wives Association in the mid-1980s. She later returned home to Pine Needles where she helped carry on her parents' business and worked as a golf instructor. She established her own legacy by becoming the face of Pine Needles and was well known for her thorough and dedicated coaching. In 2016, she became an assistant coach for the Sandhills Community College women's golf team. As proof of her love for the game and true desire to help all succeed on the course, she did not accept pay for her efforts and instead volunteered her time coaching the college team for 6 years. Mrs. McGowan was